



April 19, 2007

## Monthly Newsletter

For more stories and information please visit the USAID/CAR website, <http://centralasia.usaid.gov>

### Regional

#### Drug Demand Reduction Program Reaches Vulnerable Populations in the Region

The USAID-funded Drug Demand Reduction Program (DDRP) implemented a range of activities in Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and the Ferghana Valley region of Kyrgyzstan from 2003 to 2007.

The program awarded more than 50 grants to NGOs and government organizations, opened Treatment Readiness, Drug Free Treatment, and Rehabilitation Centers for drug users in all three countries, and helped develop the treatment readiness and drug free treatment and rehabilitation program protocols. DDRP helped deliver drug demand reduction and health promotion messages, including a documentary "Fine Line" for general audiences in Uzbekistan and a regional TV campaign for youth about the risk of contracting HIV/AIDS through injecting drugs. More than 1,200 people visited DDRP's resource center in Dushanbe, Tajikistan for information on public health, HIV/AIDS, and drug prevention, and Tajik labor migrants received a migrants' guide. The program provided vocational and drug demand reduction education to 460 vulnerable women and reached 1,500 rural-to-urban migrants through drug demand reduction education and referral system, and trained more than 3,500 of the region's professionals. Additionally, nearly 3,000 drug users received treatment readiness and drug-free treatment and rehabilitation services.



To reduce drug demand, DDRP provided vocational training to youth at risk.  
Photo: DDRP

#### USAID Commemorates the World Tuberculosis (TB) Day

In March, USAID and Project HOPE's TB program held a number of events to commemorate the World TB Day in all five Central Asian republics. The program conducted a series of conferences focused on TB awareness for medical students, government officials, international and local NGOs, and media. The topic was promoted through competitions for children, health workers, and TB patients. Mass media covered all of these events, and in some cases local TV and radio stations aired clips on TB awareness and treatment options.

For example, in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, TB awareness was raised through a contest of children's art in one of the city's parks, "Children for the world without TB." Meanwhile in Kyrgyzstan's capital Bishkek more than 10,000 teenagers attended a USAID-sponsored show that included many messages and facts about TB, while a USAID-sponsored NGO organized workshops on TB for administrators in 57 schools of the city. Over 200 vocational school students attended in USAID-supported trainings about TB in Issyk-Ata, a region with high percentage of HIV-infected people. USAID received official appreciation for its TB efforts from the Ministry of Health at a press conference that was broadcast primetime on all TV channels.



10,000 youth attended a USAID-sponsored TB day theater event in Bishkek. Photo: USAID



## Kazakhstan

### USAID Project Gives Kazakhstanis a Voice in Their Courts

In February, Court Customer Satisfaction Surveys were placed in four courts in Kazakhstan: two oblast courts and two rayon courts. The surveys are part of a pilot project implemented by the USAID Kazakhstan Judicial Assistance Project working with the Union of Judges of Kazakhstan. The surveys gather opinions and comments from court users to help measure the quality, performance, and effectiveness of the courts and their services. They are also intended to give citizens a voice and create a more active and concerned populace that will have an expectation of justice with their judicial system. Several dozen surveys were submitted during the first month of the pilot, with most respondents reporting positive experiences at the courts. The most common concerns focused on the length of time respondents waited for service, and the accuracy of the information they were given by court staff. The survey results will help contribute to the continued development of Kazakhstan's judicial system. The surveys will be replicated more broadly throughout Kazakhstan if the pilot project is successful.



The Customer Satisfaction Surveys gather opinions and comments from court users on the court services. Photo: KJAP

### An Association Helps Simplify the Certification of Travel Service Providers

The Kazakhstan Tourism Association, with support from two USAID projects, persuaded the lawmakers to cancel the mandatory certification of services related to booking and selling tickets for passenger and cargo air transportation. The decision benefits about 550 ticket agents, travel agents, and hotels in Kazakhstan. The USAID Trade Facilitation and Investment project and the USAID Business Environment Improvement project worked with the association in amending several laws to eliminate the mandatory certification by a state committee. The requirement was considered unnecessary as nearly all country's travel agents receive voluntary international accreditation, which allows them to access international airline reservation and booking networks. With USAID support, the association held a series of discussions with government stakeholders during 2006, which resulted in the abolishment of the certification requirement.



More than 500 organizations will benefit from the elimination of unnecessary certification. Photo: BEI

### USAID Assists Avian Flu Preparedness in Kazakhstan

USAID, through the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Winrock International, continues to support the Government of Kazakhstan in avian influenza preparedness. In December, USAID sponsored a conference on avian influenza surveillance for representatives from all five countries of Central Asia. The conference worked on country-specific influenza pandemic preparedness plans and guidelines for epidemiology, laboratory, clinical, and veterinary practices. In February, Winrock International trained 28 veterinary specialists from all oblasts of Kazakhstan on surveillance and response; these specialists will train colleagues in their home oblasts. USAID-supported trainings for rayon-level specialists commenced in early



USAID sponsors avian flu preparedness trainings for Kazakhstan's veterinarians. Photo: USAID





**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

April. Yet another training was organized by CDC for national and oblast level specialists from virology and extremely dangerous pathogen laboratories, who will be responsible for operating equipment for detection of influenza or highly pathogenic avian influenza. Additionally, a USAID-sponsored Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance project initiated a study of migratory birds and avian influenza in Kazakhstan and will help standardize field sampling techniques. USAID is also working with the governments of Central Asia to replicate similar programs in other countries.

## Kyrgyzstan

### 10,000 Kyrgyz Households Will Have Access to Improved Orchard Management Services

In March, 40 agricultural service providers graduated from the first phase of a 12-month training under the *Home Orchard Protection Project*, implemented in over 30 southern Kyrgyzstan's communities by USAID's Collaborative Development Initiative. The project, administered by Mercy Corps, aims to improve knowledge and skills of local service providers in tree crop protection using organic methods. The project also works to improve use of chemicals, as current application practices put human health and the environment at risk. During the second phase of the program participants will study field-based practices and business management. Over 100 service providers are due to complete the program in September 2007 and will be able to extend their improved services to communities.



Participants learn to assess timing for application of pest and fungus prevention measures. Photo: Mercy Corps

### New Law on Inspections of Businesses will Empower Entrepreneurs

On March 27, the Kyrgyz Parliament approved the Law on Inspections of Businesses, one of the important improvements for the Kyrgyz business community. This law was drafted by the USAID Commercial Law Project and the USAID Trade Facilitation and Investment Project together with private sector representatives and received active support from several parliamentarians. The law sets up principles and rules for inspections by government agencies and defines rights and duties of inspectors and of inspected businesses. Inspections often have negative effect on business development and economic growth due to corruption resulting from poorly-regulated inspection procedures, lack of protection of the rights of inspected businesses, and wrong incentives for inspectors. It is expected that this law will decrease the government interference in businesses operations. Once the law is signed by the President, the USAID Business Environment Improvement Project will launch an information campaign to inform businesses about this law and work with government agencies to streamline inspection procedures.



Member of the Parliament Omurbek Babanov was an active sponsor of the law. Photo: USAID

### USAID's Pilot Schools Make a Leap towards Sustainability

Over the past two years, the 11 pilot schools, participating in the USAID Participation, Education and Knowledge Strengthening (PEAKS) project, have obtained legal registration as Centers of Innovative Education Technologies. These schools have been receiving assistance from USAID's project to become training and resource centers for clusters of



USAID's project helps introduce interactive teaching methods in schools. Photo: PEAKS



surrounding schools. USAID's project has built high-quality training capacity in each of the pilots, enabling them to deliver courses in modern educational technologies and teaching methods for pre-school, school, and extracurricular teachers. With their new legal status, the schools will be able to operate as stand-alone training providers, and minimize their financial dependence on external support. To strengthen collaboration with state authorities and other organizations, the centers have recently set up two associations, in the south and north of Kyrgyzstan. It is expected that the associations will increase participation of schools in education policy making and serve as advocacy structures to promote necessary changes both with the Government and among their constituent communities.

## Tajikistan

### Public Campaigns Teach to Protect Environment

Over the past year, the USAID-funded Water User Association Support Program (implemented by Winrock International) organized 14 campaigns titled "How to avoid pollution in canals" at local schools in Rudaki, Shaartruz, Vahdat, and Kabodiyon Districts. These campaigns aim to encourage Tajikistan's communities to maintain their irrigation canals and reduce pollution, as well as inform about the USAID-funded program's goals and achievements. More than 3,000 schoolchildren, teachers, members and women associates from water user associations, as well as community representatives participated in these events. The program promotes the effective use and distribution of irrigation water through improved management of irrigation systems, institutional development of water user associations and community involvement in rational distribution of water resources.



Campaigns teach children and adults to take care of their water resources. Photo: Winrock International

## Turkmenistan

### USAID-Supported Organization Takes Lead in Agricultural Law Public Discussions

After Presidential elections in February, Turkmenistan's new government announced plans for reforms and legal initiatives in the agricultural sector. The USAID-supported Ilkinjiler Farmers' Association immediately responded to this process by holding numerous farmers and other citizens meetings throughout Mary welayat to discuss the draft laws. Ilkinjiler also organized a meeting with their visiting parliament member and presented their verbal and written comments that were to be considered in the final version of the drafts.

USAID assisted the public discussion process by providing information, office space, techniques and other resources for the association. Previously, outstanding advocacy by this USAID-supported association resulted in heightened implementation of cotton sales law.

### Number of Certified Accountants in Turkmenistan Continues to Grow

In a ceremony on March 10, the Union of Accountants of Turkmenistan conferred Certified Accounting Practitioner (CAP) status to twenty-four new accountants, bringing the number of these certified professionals in the country to 90. The union is the first independent, professional accounting association in Turkmenistan, created with assistance from USAID. In cooperation with this organization USAID's Accounting/Certified International Professional Accountant project and the earlier Enterprise Development Project (EDP) promotes the adoption of



Newly certified accounting practitioners. Photo: A/CIPA





**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# CENTRAL ASIAN REPUBLICS

International Accounting Standards. Over the past three years, the Union of Accountants and other organizations have delivered over 70 training courses for more than 1,300 participants, 72% of which were women.

## Uzbekistan

### **USAID's Support in Development of the Accounting Audit is Welcomed by Uzbek Government**

In February USAID's Accounting/Certified International Professional Accountant project organized a round-table discussion entitled "International Federation of Accountants and Development of Accounting and Audit in Uzbekistan." The event was attended by over 40 representatives of international and local professional organizations, local auditing firms, higher education institutions, professional associations, and authorities, including the Ministry of Finance. Participants discussed how international auditing and accounting standards can be adopted in Uzbekistan. A representative of the Ministry of Finance underlined that the accounting reform activities should focus on the introduction of the international standards for financial reporting and audit in Uzbekistan.



The USAID-sponsored discussion focused on the introduction of international financial reporting and audit standards. Photo: USAID

### **Uzbekistan's Credit Unions Association Develops Additional Safeguards for Member Unions**

In February, the Credit Unions Association of Uzbekistan, supported by USAID's Savings and Credit Unions Development project, officially announced a launch of a deposit guarantee system, titled "Alyans Garant" Stabilization Fund. The fund guarantees return of up to \$800 for each depositor in the case of liquidation of a participating credit union. The fund will also monitor the liquidity and solvency of participating credit unions. To become a member, a credit union has to meet rigorous management and financial standards; so far, only seven credit unions out of seventeen members of the association have been accepted as members. USAID's Savings and Credit Union Development Project, implemented by WOCCU, has supported the Credit Union Association since its inception. The project provides technical consulting, trains staff and elected officials of the association and participating credit unions, assists in the administration of audit division, development of internal policies and procedures, as well as introduction of new products and services.



One of the thousands of small businesses that receive financing from credit unions. Photo: WOCCU

### **A USAID-Supported Shelter Has Assisted 200 Trafficking Victims**

The shelter for trafficking victims in Tashkent was opened by the USAID-funded Combating Trafficking in Persons project in December 2004. The center provides services for girls and women who suffered from human trafficking. Trafficking victims receive support for their reintegration in the society. The center organizes trainings for women to develop their job skills such as hair-dressing, baking, and sewing and helps to overcome social barriers that often face trafficking victims upon their return home.



In addition to supporting the shelter, USAID programs train professionals to assist trafficking victims. Photo: USAID